



FEMA

Region III Report

Region III Supports NFIP Outreach Teams

Seven months after Hurricane Isabel struck the mid-Atlantic region, Maryland and Virginia residents are still struggling to resolve problems with their flood insurance claims. In a move to assist policyholders, the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) announced a special claim review process on April 2 to ensure they receive fair settlements.

With the formation of community outreach teams in Maryland, Virginia and North Carolina, the NFIP is working to address the concerns of policyholders who were severely impacted by Isabel. The first outreach session was held in Bowley's Quarters, Md., on April 8.

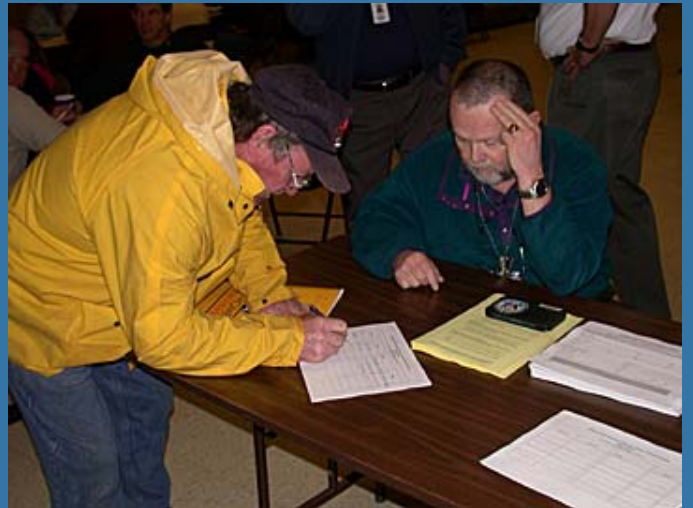
"Region III is playing a significant role in these outreach efforts, said Acting Regional Director Patricia Arcuri. "We have one team in each state and are committed to making these sessions a success."

Outreach teams are visiting communities with a large number of claims and providing an opportunity for policyholders to meet one-on-one with claims specialists. The teams are answering questions about flood insurance and more, equipped with specialists from mitigation and individual assistance to community relations, congressional liaison and public affairs officers.

As of April 29, six sessions have been held in Virginia and seven in Maryland. The outreach effort will wrap up on May 6, with the last session in Dorchester County, Md. (The remaining locations are listed at www.fema.gov.)

The community sessions are just one of three ways policyholders can request a review of their claim. Those who submitted claims for flood damage from Isabel will receive a form in the mail to request a review. In addition, the NFIP has established a toll-free number, 1-800-427-4661, that people can use to reach customer service reps who will take the necessary information and initiate a review. This toll-free number will be staffed from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week.

The creation of these teams is the first of several actions planned as result of the National Flood Insurance Summit held on March 25-26 in Falls Church, Va. To date, the NFIP has processed more than 24,000 Isabel claims in six states and the District of Columbia—95 percent of which have been paid, totaling nearly \$405 million.



Bowley's Quarters, Md., April 8, 2004 -- FEMA Community Relations Officer John Sheehan (right) assists a flood insurance policyholder as he signs in at the first National Flood Insurance Program community outreach session, where 139 people gathered to seek help in resolving problems with their insurance claims.



Bowley's Quarters, Md., April 8, 2004 -- A National Flood Insurance Program claims specialist meets with policyholders to initiate the review of their claim.

NDMS moves to FEMA

Region III welcomes National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Coordinator Harry Mayer to FEMA. He moved into the regional office on March 15.

Previously part of the Department of Health and Human Services, NDMS was transferred to FEMA when the Department of Homeland Security was established on March 1, 2003. Under the National Response Plan, it manages and coordinates the federal medical response to major emergencies and federally declared disasters.

NDMS fulfills several key roles during an emergency response operation: Medical response to a disaster area in the form of teams, supplies, and equipment; patient movement from a disaster site to unaffected areas of the nation; and definitive medical care at participating hospitals in unaffected areas. NDMS comprises 150 disaster medical response units to assist civilian casualties, an evacuation system and 100,000 pre-committed beds in hospitals throughout the United States.

In December 2003, Mayer was part of an NDMS team deployed to Bam, Iran, in response to the devastating earthquake. With no embassy in the country for 23 years, the majority of the coordination had to be done at a moment's notice.

With just a trailer, a Suburban SUV and as many medical supplies as they could bring, the team set up two tents – one for males, one for females - and quickly began seeing patients alongside medical teams from around the world. The team operated the hospital for four days, working 16 to 18 hour days and treating 727 patients.



National Disaster Medical System personnel at work inside mobile hospital in Bam, Iran, after the December 2003 earthquake.

News from our state partners



State Hazard Mitigation Officer Barry Macciocca (right) hands Region III Federal Insurance and Mitigation Division Director Gene Gruber a copy of West Virginia's new mitigation plan.

W. Va. submits new mitigation plan

The West Virginia Office of Emergency Management visited the Region III office on March 8 to submit their new state mitigation plan. They are the first Region III state to complete a plan in compliance with the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 (DMA2K).

The act provides a framework for linking pre- and post-mitigation planning and initiatives with public and private interests, ensuring an integrated, comprehensive approach to disaster loss reduction. In addition, implementation of pre-identified, cost-effective mitigation measures will streamline the disaster recovery process.

The DMA2K also establishes new requirements for local mitigation plans and authorizes up to seven percent of their Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding for the development of state and local plans. West Virginia used this funding to hire a consultant to assist in the development of their plan.

Philippi joins Community Rating System

The West Virginia Office of Emergency Services presented a plaque to the city of Philippi, commemorating its entrance into the National Flood Insurance Program's (NFIP) Community Rating System (CRS). The CRS recognizes communities whose local mitigation, outreach and educational activities go well beyond minimum NFIP requirements. Philippi is the first community in the state to enter the CRS, and membership has its benefits. Philippi residents now receive up to a ten percent discount on flood insurance. More importantly, CRS communities actively save lives and reduce property damage.

In Brief...

► Mitigation Workshop with Historical Black Colleges and Universities

The Mid-Atlantic Region Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) held a workshop on March 30-31 on risk management and mitigation. The workshop, held at the University of Maryland, provided the opportunity for the HBCU to interface with their state and local emergency managers, thereby supporting the transfer risk management academic research to community practitioners. FEMA Headquarters chose the Region III Outreach Unit to lead this pilot session. All 16 HBCU members in Region III participated in the workshop. Eventually, this outreach effort will include all 105 HBCU members nationwide.

► Last round of FY 2003 Assistance to Firefighters grants

The last round of 2003 *Assistance to Firefighters* grants was announced March 5. Region III states received a total of \$80,189,822 in grant funding. The state-by-state breakdown is as follows:

- Delaware: \$1,096,900
- Maryland: \$8,153,775
- Pennsylvania: \$45,179,556
- Virginia: \$15,816,878
- West Virginia: \$9,942,713

The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) will administer the 2004 *Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program*. FEMA will continue to assist ODP during the transition.

► First round of FY 2003 Fire Prevention and Safety Program grants

The Department of Homeland Security announced the first round of the 2003 *Assistance to Firefighters Fire Prevention and Safety Program (FP&S)* noncompetitive grants. Region III recipients are Maryland, \$40,500; Pennsylvania, \$168,641; and Virginia, \$155,752. Approximately three more groups of fiscal year 2003 FP&S awards will be announced over the next several months.



Acting Regional Director Patricia Arcuri with 5th District Coast Guard officials Rear Admiral Sally Brice-O'Hara and Captain Larry Bowling after their March 29 visit to the regional office. The next day, Arcuri and the Response and Recovery Division Director, Tom Majusiak, joined Rear Adm. Brice-O'Hara and Capt. Bowling at the state Capitol in Harrisburg, Pa., for a briefing. The governor's chief of staff, the state homeland security advisor and other state officials gathered to hear the preparedness and response capabilities of the Coast Guard's Philadelphia and Pittsburgh ports.

► Pre-Disaster Mitigation competitive grants

On April 6, Under Secretary Michael Brown announced the release of \$26 million in Pre-Disaster Mitigation Competitive Grant Program funds for pre-disaster mitigation planning and preparedness activities. The announcement included a \$75,000 grant for multi-hazard mitigation planning for Prince George's County, Maryland.

On the move...



National Disaster Medical System (NDMS) Emergency Coordinator Harry Mayer moved to the regional office on March 15.



Science Kilner has accepted the Environmental Officer position in the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Division. She began her tour of duty on March 22.